

## **HEALTH COMMITTEE meeting of March 22, 2000**

A regular meeting of the Health Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Media Room, First Floor of the H. Lee Dennison Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge New York, 11788, on March 22, 2000, at 9:30 A.M.

### **Members Present:**

Legislator Ginny Fields - Chairperson  
Legislator Brian Foley - Vice-Chair  
Legislator Joseph Caracappa  
Legislator Michael Caracciolo  
Legislator Andrew Crecca

### **Also in Attendance:**

Paul Sabatino - Counsel to the Legislature  
Mary Skiber - Aide to Legislator Fields  
Linda Burkhardt - Aide to Presiding Officer Tonna  
Frank Tassone - Aide to Legislator Crecca  
Brenda Rosenberg - County Executive's Office  
Kim Brandeau - Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office  
Gail Vizzini - Senior Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office  
Lance Reinheimer - Senior Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office  
Bonnie Godsman - County Executive's Office/IR  
Coni Lorensen - County Executive's Office  
Dr. Clare Bradley - Commissioner/Department of Health Services  
Robert Maimoni - Administration/Department of Health Services  
Dr. Scott Campbell - Entomologist/SC Dept of Health Services  
Charles Bartha - Commissioner/Department of Public Works  
Leslie Mitchell - Assistant to the Commissioner/Dept of Public Works Dominick Ninnivaggi - Superintendent-Vector Control/DPW  
Bernard R. Kirschbaum - The Mental Health Association  
in Suffolk County, Inc.  
Helen Bell - Mental Health Association  
James Farr - Mental Health Association  
nancy Manteiga - 2nd Vice-President/AME  
Madeline Feindt - AME

### **Minutes Taken By:**

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

(\*The meeting was called to order at 9:55 A.M.\*)

### **CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Please stand for the pledge of allegiance, Legislator Caracciolo will lead us.

### **Salutation**

Good morning. Is this on? I guess maybe we can just do the cards. We have Dr. Mark Henry.

### **MS. MAHONEY:**

Those are from yesterday.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

These are from yesterday. So we have no speakers; is that true? This is also from yesterday?

**MR. SABATINO:**

They spoke on the helicopters.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay. Then let's go right into the review of the Suffolk County Vector Control Plan; Dominick Ninnivaggi, Charlie Bartha and

Dr. Clare Bradley.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Dominick will give a summary of the major aspects of the plan, particularly the operational aspects. And if anyone has any questions on it, obviously we will be glad to entertain them.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

All right, I'll try to keep -- it's, I guess, a 23 page plan, so I will try to keep this very short. I simply want to point out that Suffolk County has had an ongoing mosquito control program for many years. And for many years we have used an integrated approach and that approach has always been based on non pesticide techniques for mosquito control and is operated hierarchically up to the use of pesticides in residential areas, and that continues.

West Nile Virus does change things somewhat in the sense that in previous years our program tended to be focused on the Salt Marsh Mosquito and on Eastern Encephalitis, and those areas tend -- those mosquito problems tend to be localized in the County. West Nile Virus, as far as we can tell, could appear almost anywhere in the County.

In response to that, the Legislature and the Executive were very generous in allowing an increase in our staffing level, and the way we plan to use that increase is to expand mosquito preventative services throughout the County. We should keep in mind that mosquito-borne disease is an ongoing problem, this is not a new problem in Suffolk County, and parts of Suffolk County would be very difficult to live in if not for some sort of mosquito control. And there's actually a demand for mosquito control in the County. We get several thousand requests for spray every summer, we have to set up a computer system to really deal with that and dispatch our response. So this is something that the public is very interested in and that the public, from my point of view, definitely seems to want.

As we think about West Nile, we should remember that Eastern Encephalitis has not changed and it hasn't gone away. And depending upon conditions, many of which we don't understand, it could appear in the County at any time and it has appeared in four out of the last seven years. So we need to continue our program dealing with Eastern Encephalitis.

If not for West Nile, a big story this year would have been the cases of Malaria that appeared in Camp Baiting Hollow area. We were fortunate that only two boys were ill and they recovered fully, but it demonstrates that West Nile Virus is not the only exotic pathogen that entered the County last year and that potential remains. It's important to think about things like West Nile, but we should also keep in mind that in general we don't know when these things are going to pick up or appear in the County, so having an ongoing program provides a margin of safety in dealing with this.

We are the only program in the north east that deals with Eastern Encephalitis in a preventative basis in terms of using larvicides to control the main vector. We plan to continue that in the coming year but we have to remain very vigilant on that issue.

One of the things that we have done over the last few years is to improve the technology that we use. We have been very successful in being very more effective in dealing with mosquitoes in their breeding sites and in their larval stages, and we've actually succeeded in reducing our use of pesticides in the residential areas over the last few years. I know that when I came to the program in 1994, it was standard practice to have to do an aerial adulticide, aerial spray of the residential areas twice a year and each spray would encompass about 10,000 acres, basically the whole shore line of Islip, Brookhaven

and parts of Southampton. We have been able to reduce that to only the area basically in the western -- in the eastern end of Great South Bay, Mastic-Shirley and sometimes Bellport, and last year we didn't even need to do that. So we have made a lot of progress in reducing pesticide use and a lot of that comes from improved technology.

As we gear up for the coming year, it's going to be an ongoing process. We received an increase in funding, we are in the process of acquiring equipment, we are in the process of hiring people. These people need to be trained, to be brought out on the job, it's going to be another couple of months before they're all fully operational. But as far as we can tell, the primary time of the year of concern for disease transmission is July to August. So we are moving ahead with this and it's going to take some time, but I think that we're on track. And I would certainly point out that if you look at control programs around the State and around the region, I think you'll find that we're way ahead of other programs.

I will -- the only other thing I want to point out about West Nile Virus is that Eastern Virus can be detected in mosquito species that only bite birds, and that's where it's found first so it gives you some margin in dealing with the problem. When you detect West Nile Virus, species of mosquito that bite people are already involved. So this is one reason why we may have to respond fairly expeditiously once any kind of virus activity is detected, whether it's in birds or in mosquitoes, because human biting species are already in the mixture.

I will skip through the descriptions of the program which are all there for you to see and I'm certainly prepared to answer any kind of questions. The only thing I would point out is that as far as the program components, water management is the major component, we continue to put a lot of effort into that. We do spray work basically from late April through September, the rest of the year we all do water management work. We are acquiring new equipment, we've acquired new equipment in the last couple of years, by the fall we'll have three other new pieces of equipment in that effort, so we will continue to expand that. Right now our crews are just about finished with a 200 acre Open Marsh Water Management Project at the William Floyd Estate which is a project that combines mosquito control and restoration. So water management remains a big part of our program.

Our larval control, we'll continue to use what the EPA refers to as biopesticides, the bacterial products or the insect growth regulator Methoprene. I've had indications from the State that they will approve the use of sustained release Altosid and catch basins. You can put 150 day briquette of Altosid, that basically gives you control for the whole season, so that should be helpful to us.

Adult control will continue to be a last resort. We will continue to use the least toxicity pesticides for that purpose and we hope to improve greatly our public information as far as that effort goes.

And I should point out that environmental compliance is a major issue with us, it occupies a lot of our time and effort, permitting, reporting. In this report it mentions our pesticide report that goes to the State as being 80,000 lines, it turns out it's 90,000 lines; needless to say, you need computer technology to put out that kind of reporting. And our staff biologist spent a good deal of his time, a good three to four months solidly working on getting that report out. Unfortunately, while he was working on that, he was unable to be out there designing water management projects. So environmental compliance is important to us and it does occupy a lot of time and effort.

Dr. Bradley might want to speak a bit about public education efforts that are going on this year, that's going to be greatly expanded with the Health Department taking the lead on that.

We have a very active surveillance program and have for many years. The Health Department has added additional resources to that to further -- to control our program and to evaluate its effectiveness. What we would like to do is to be able to target any work we need to

only those places where it's really needed, and that's another way of reducing pesticide applications.

As far as our long range goals, there is a section in the report about that. Here I will only mention that we are continuing to

try to modernize the program, I think if you look at what we do and compare that with other programs in the region, I think you will find that we have one of the most modern, most fully integrated -- in many cases what we do here on the County level is comparable to what's done on the State level elsewhere. So I think that while our program may have come into some criticism over the last year, I think if you compare what we do with what's recommended not only by professional mosquito control organizations, but even by environmental groups you will find that in most cases, if not all, we're already doing the things that the people would like us to do.

At that point, rather than going on any longer, I think I would like to entertain any questions you have.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Thank you, Dominick. I have probably a bunch of questions, but one in particular. You talked about sustained release pellets, I think, being put into the catch basins?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

When is that actually applied, what's the time frame of doing that?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

It will be most important to do that into May and June. The mosquito breeding takes a little longer to get going here than in some of the other parts of the region, Long Island is a maritime climate so spring comes a little bit later here. For a 150 day briquette, you can put it out theoretically in May, but they're rather expensive, they're \$2 a piece and with tens of thousands of catch basins you want to be judicious about that material. But probably in May.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

What's the other alternative?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Excuse me?

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

What's the alternative?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, the alternative, there's also a bacterial product, Vectilex Which has been shown to have some sustained capability.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

And how is that applied?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

That's a granule that's also applied in the catch basin, and we can also apply that with blowers out onto larger areas. So that's proven to be a very versatile product. The altercit Pellets are designed for 30 days, but it turns out that if you put them in catch basins there's a lot of research that they last quite a bit longer than that and it's quite a bit cheaper than the 150 day briquettes, so I'm sure that those will enter into the program. And they will also be used in areas, I can think of an area in Smithtown where we have a drainage swale that periodically floods and if we can throw altercit Pellets in that, it will probably provide most of the season worth of control. So those products are something that we hope to be able to stretch our labor with.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

So are we prepared to really, for a better term, blitz all of the catch basins in Suffolk County, you know, in a timely fashion that will cut down on any of that breeding of mosquitoes early on?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, all the catch basins don't need to be treated, fortunately, because many of them dry out on their own. It will take -- we probably won't have the full field staff all over the County until sometime the middle of the summer to look at all these things. This year we're going to have to be identifying some of the potential breeding sites. But I think that by the time that viral activity is most likely, we'll certainly -- if not every catch basin, we'll certainly have a good handle on the ones that need to be treated.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

All right. I'm going to let Legislator Caracciolo -- do you all want? Okay, we'll just go right through the row.

**LEG. CARACCIOLO:**

Good morning, Charlie. Good morning, Dr. Bradley. With respect to the action plan or plan of work for 2000, has this plan been approved by the State of New York; does it require the state's approval or any federal agency's approval?

(\*Legislator Foley entered the meeting at 10:11 A.M.\*)

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

For the State, we put in what's called a State aid application, actually the Health Department puts that through since the County is eligible for some reimbursement from the State, and I guess Dr. Bradley can speak to the status of the State Aid application. But this plan itself is an internal County document. We are in the process of applying for our various state permits that constitute the State approval for what we do.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

The State Aid application was submitted last week and it's similar to previous State Aid applications. And we've had discussions with the entomology people at the State Health Department, we don't anticipate any problems.

**LEG. CARACCIOLO:**

Okay. But in terms of the materials we use to combat the pest problems, do they require any State or Federal regulatory authority permission?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Yes.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Oh yes.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

And Dominick is probably better to speak to that.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, first of all the products have to be registered and labeled for use in the State. First they are registered on the Federal level, then they're registered on the State level. For anything we put in the water we need what's called an Article 15 Aquatic Permit and for each product we get a separate permit, so we'll get nine to ten permits for the nine or ten products we put in the water. We also -- many of these areas that we treat are fresh water wetlands and yet another permit is needed to treat fresh water wetlands which usually mirrors the Article 15 permit. So a lot of permitting goes on around this time of the year. Fortunately, because we've been doing this for many years, we have an ongoing relationship with the DEC staff, we have prefiled maps, and most, if not all, the technical issues have already been resolved. So we can operate right now under last year's permits because they haven't expired yet and we will be putting in our permits, so the state will have an opportunity to look at all of these.

**LEG. CARACCIOLO:**

Okay. As it's been widely reported and I guess now known, West Nile has only appeared in this hemisphere one time, that

was last year in the New York Metropolitan area. No other part of the US had any problem with this mosquito?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

No, just the eastern coast.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay. In terms of other sites around the world, you talked about Africa at the last committee meeting, was there any outbreaks Europe or in other countries?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Romania had an outbreak.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay, I was unaware of that; that was mentioned to me earlier today. Could you just explain how they dealt with this issue and what success they've had and what application methods they've used?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

I don't have specifics in terms of the vector control side, I have more knowledge in terms of the clinical cases and the fact that it waned after the first year, that there were several deaths from it and with successive years the number of clinical cases decreased. I don't know about vector control issues, I'd ask Dominick if he knows.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Yeah, I haven't been able to find any information on that because certainly I was looking for that once we realized it was West Nile, but there is very little published on that. In 1999 there was also an outbreak in Russia, but it's very difficult to get information out as to exactly what happened there. I know they had an ongoing Malaria Control Program there, but it's very difficult to get information from that part of the world on exactly what they did.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay. So I notice here in your report which appears to be very well researched and prepared, and I don't know what page this is, Dominick, maybe I can go to a -- well, it's under the West Nile Virus Response, the second page of that down at the third paragraph, it talks about the County's response and joint effort with the State and Federal Centers For Disease Control. And I note, it says, "West Nile Virus represents a regional problem and the County is participating in regional solutions"; could you elaborate?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

We have been working very actively with the Federal CDC and with the State Health Department on this issue. Dr. Scott Campbell and I went to Fort Collins, Colorado, in the Fall to work with the CDC on helping to develop the National Response Plan. We have been working -- the State Health Department has organized working groups to develop the State Response Plan; I have been working on the Prevention Response Control aspects of the plan and Dr. Campbell has been working on the surveillance component of that. So we have been actively involved in helping to develop these plans. As a matter of fact, I still owe the State some technical guidelines on use of adulticides, so they have requested our help in many cases because of our experience in this and because we are a large program in this area.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Last summer when the cases of Encephalitis first started occurring in the City, we started daily conference calls with the involved County Health Department Commissioners, the City, the State, the CDC, and as other states began becoming involved they also participated in the conference calls, so these went on for weeks. And then, as Dominick said, there were follow up meetings in Fort Collins and other meetings. We have all participated, all the counties that were involved, with the response plan that the State has prepared as well as CDC. And we have discussions with the CDC on different issues, on mosquito types, and Dr. Scott Campbell who is the Entomologist is here and can speak to that.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

I know from a public perspective for the people that live and reside in Nassau/Suffolk County as well as those in the City, New York, Connecticut and New Jersey, there was a lot of confusion because it seemed the city approach dealing with this problem one way, Nassau County another, Rockland County yet a different way and so on and so forth. And as a result, I think there's been split opinion as to who's doing it right and who's doing it wrong. And as it appeared this year that there will be a uniform approach by the different municipalities, at least in the State of New York?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Yeah, let me speak to that. And let me just say there was a person from the public who commented on aerial spraying in Rockland County, I spoke to the Acting Commissioner, Dominick spoke to Vector Control people, they have not banned aerial spraying in Rockland County; again, it's a last resort just like it is here, but they have not banned it.

Last year in the city, when they identified the Encephalitis cases, they had no surveillance program, they had no ongoing program where they collected mosquitoes, knew where different types of mosquitoes were. We had that, Nassau had it to a lesser extent, many of the other counties have no vector control program. So when we approached it, we approached it based on where we had virus in birds and mosquitoes and we targeted those areas where there was the greatest risk of transmission of disease. The city came in after the fact, they had human cases; I mean, I'm happier that we prevented having human cases. It's better to be here saying we prevented having cases than to come and say, "Okay, we have three people with Encephalitis, two of them have died, we have to now do something." So we treated it in the early stages.

The State has been working with all the counties to get them to have surveillance for mosquitoes. So going forward, the other counties will be more in line with Suffolk County and Nassau in terms of catching it early when there's virus in a community before you have a case of Encephalitis.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

I think we should also point out that if you look at all the information we have about West Nile, it seemed like the center of activity was Northern Queens, that's where most of the human cases were, that's where if you look at the bird serology data, the most highest infection rates in birds were. So New York City had to respond a little differently partly because that's where really a lot of the activity was. We were fortunate in having an ongoing program, we were probably also fortunate in being somewhat on the outskirts of the main problem. So the fact that the different areas reacted differently doesn't necessarily mean that one was doing it right and one was doing it wrong, I think each area had its own unique set of problems and circumstances.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

In terms of the staff and equipment that's been ordered and in terms

of staffing, I notice here we're going to be hiring additional Sanitarians; where do we stand in terms of that process?

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Just in response to your inquiry about that by letter yesterday, it's quite a cumbersome process we go through to fill positions in the County. We had positions authorized -- I requested them in the beginning of January, shortly afterwards they were authorized to be filled and they were promotional positions, blue collar, so we have to do a posting. Before we did a posting we worked with the union because these titles require pesticide application licenses. We didn't have enough candidates who had pesticide application licenses, so we wanted to protect them in the event we promoted them and they were not able to acquire that license within a set period of time. So we came to a mutual agreement on that, we made the posting, we only had one response; actually, we had no responses initially from within the department.

Under the contract, the next step is to post it County wide. We posted it County-wide, that posting closed about a week ago, we had about two or three responses in total. So now we are interviewing those persons as well as people from outside the

County that we have applications on file that appear to meet the qualifications. So like specs, over the next four to six weeks we will have some of the positions filled, I would say six to eight weeks I would expect to have all of them filled. And the equipment to support these people will be coming in a similar time frame, probably June or July we will have all the equipment. But in the meantime, these people have to be trained, of course, and they will be with the existing crews for the training.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

In terms of their training, Charlie, is that in-house training or they go somewhere for training?

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

In-house training.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay. And how many hours or weeks does that require?

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Dominick?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, Cornell Cooperative Extension is conducting a 30 hour training course which is the State mandated course for what we call Pesticide Technicians, and that's planned for the first week in April. So I'm hoping to get as many of these positions filled as we can by the time of the training course. That course will also fulfill some of our ongoing training requirements and some of the other County departments will participate in that. So I am trying to get as many of these people on board by the training course as I possibly can. And again, that's State mandated training, there will be a State required exam that they have to take. And that's basic requirement,

certainly we want to get people out in the field with some of our experienced people before we put them out on their own.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

In terms of how the department is managed, do the employees in the Division of Vector Control, they have seniority I'm sure and they're entitled to certain leave, time and leave provisions; do they take summer vacations and how does that impact the monitoring of our programs?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, we have a vacation policy, we limit employees to one week basically during the summer and we have that coordinated among -- the foremen work to coordinate that to limit the number of people out in any one title at any one time. So we try to limit vacation time during the summer without making this a tough place to work. At one time, vacation during the summer was completely banned. We have been able to relax that policy somewhat again because we are using some more effective materials, the really hot season tends to really get going later than it used to. So we do coordinate vacation time and limit it during the summer, consistent with maintaining reasonably good morale among the work force.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay. Don't take this in the wrong way, Charlie, but the question that comes to mind is we approved the budget in November, is there some reason why we wait till January to start the process of hiring new employees?

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

The budget doesn't take effect until January so I couldn't get the positions released.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay. In terms of that process of getting the positions released, that's an administrative process, then we get into the posting requirements and so forth. I mean, that could take -- the administrative requirements can't take place before January?



**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

The way it's always been is any positions that are authorized to be filled, they have to be in the budget at that time and those authorizations expire at the end of the year. I submitted the requests on January 2nd, and I'll check the date but I believe I got them back sometime in January, so there was very little time lost.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

I also looked at the funding that was allowed and, in fact, the amount of money allocated, I calculated a number of positions and the amount of money allocated and it turns out that it in late March was the earliest we could hire all these people and have funding for them for the entire year. So we're pretty much on to --

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

On schedule.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

On schedule.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Recognizing it was critical to fill these positions, if you recall earlier in the year we had to develop a staffing plan to show that we could fill positions consistent with the budget and there were some discussions about that. These positions, I had spoken to the Exec's Office right in the beginning and they were not held up for, you know, any of those reasons for us to develop a plan, because everyone understands how important they are.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Very good. Last meeting, as you recall we had some representatives from environmental groups. And one of the issues that was raised was the deet sprays that we provide to educational institutions and are passed along to school children. And at least in one incident in Riverhead, an adult spray wound up in the hands of children. You assured us last month -- last meeting, rather, that that won't happen again; what safeguards are we putting in place to make sure that we don't have a recurrence of that?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

What we did last year was we distributed them through health centers and hospitals, and I didn't get the name from the woman of the day care center so I'm not exactly sure how that happened. That will be a strict requirement this year. There were two formulations, one a pediatric and one an adult, and there was a release to be signed when they were given out with an explanation for someone to read first, that this is a pediatric and this is adult and please read the directions carefully. Nassau County opted to go through the fire houses and I said no, we don't want to do that, we want them to be given out at sites of medical providers because just like pesticides, just like anything else, any time you use a medication or a chemical there's a risk to it and there's a risk benefit and the people have to understand that before they use it.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay. That individual was Debbie O'Keene -- O'Kane, rather, and she's with the North Fork Environmental Council. So you may want to contact her.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Yes, okay.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

I have her card from last time, I will write it down and give it to you.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Okay, good. Thanks.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Okay. Just a couple of more quick questions. I notice here that the new staff or the additional staff will be used in Huntington, Smithtown and the North Fork which, it's noted in this report, have been under served in the past. Could you elaborate on that action plan, how you intend to use those individuals for those locations?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, what we plan to do is in the last few years we've had seven field crews that would go out and they basically run a route visiting various potential breeding sites, checking them to see if they are breeding them and treating them. As staffing has declined over the years, we have basically prioritized and tried to put most of our effort in the areas where we have the greatest combination of people and mosquito breeding together. I came up with a number of positions I asked for basically to have seven new two-person field crews, double the number of field crews. As a first cut we plan to have one in Huntington, one in northern Smithtown, one in northern Brookhaven and Riverhead, one out on the North Fork, an additional one in -- and I hope this comes out to seven -- one out in the east end and one in the Babylon area. So we basically plan to get a crew in the general area in all the towns in the coming year so that they will be available to visit mosquito breeding sides.

Right now I have a foreman and biologist looking -- in years past we used to have routes over there, in some cases we have the old information on breeding sites. They are going out in the field now and looking at the old site cards, site records to see if the breeding sites are still there planning out routes; it covered Huntington, they will be going into Smithtown. Last Fall, because we had the horse cases, my foreman for the east end had put together a route for the north fork basically from Riverhead on out east, and that area has had more problems over the years than some of the other areas. So that area has not been entirely abandoned, that area would periodically get work even with the reduced staff. So we are in the process of planning all this but, again, it takes some time.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

We have done some work over the winter, some water management work in that area which you should speak about.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Yes. Again, since we still have our current staff -- and as a matter of fact, I have two vacancies right now, a staff member unfortunately passed away and another person is leaving for a better job. So I realize --

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Better than this?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

I know, it's hard to imagine a better job than mosquito control, but apparently they exist. I realize we had to keep our ongoing preventative program but I realized that there was an issue on the north fork, so what I did is we had an increase in our overtime budget so I have assigned crews to work out on Saturdays. We have eight to ten people out there every Saturday to renew some of the old ditching that's clogged up over the years, we have some hand crews and a crew with a piece of heavy equipment out there. And last year we did have some serious nuisance problems in some areas, the area around Pipe's Cove, there were some other areas in Jamesport where we had nuisance problems. What we want to do is renew the water management in that area on a priority basis because we did have nuisance mosquito problems, we did have the horse cases and it's not clear what the relationship is between these so-called nuisance species and the horse cases, it's possible that some species that we tend to think of as nuisance could have been transmitted. So we're not going to wait for the university types to figure out exactly what species are the true transmitters, we're going to go after the ones that we're suspect on.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Well, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you. I know recently you spoke with one of my constituents who has a horse farm, Mr. Navay, and he very much appreciated your insights and how we are approaching this problem and how we're going to deal with.

And I would like to thank Commissioner Bartha. In the past, Charlie, you have been very responsive to concerns on

Fisher's Island, we haven't had any recently. But I hope as part of our north fork response we don't forget about Fisher's Island, perhaps even Plum Island.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

I have been in touch with Mr. Thatcher At Fisher's Island. As a matter of fact, I have to -- we will be training some people for him as part of the training course and I have to remind him, I haven't yet received a request for a contractor out there, but we normally pay for one of the staff people out there and they operate under our permits.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

It's a small place and sometimes overlooked and I just want to make sure that we keep it fresh in your minds and you don't overlook it.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

No, we haven't forgotten about Fisher's Island.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Legislator --

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Caracappa was next.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Caracappa, okay.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Just a quick question going back to the catch basins. As you are well aware, attached to catch basins in most instances is a recharge area otherwise known as a sump. Many sumps in my area stay with some sort of standing water in them; are you working with the towns in any cooperative effort to deal with sumps and sitting water in sumps?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Yeah, we have already contacted the various town highway supervisors and we will be working with them. If a sump has water in it all the time, we can usually stock it with these mosquito fish, the Gambusia, and usually that will end the problem right there. We had an interesting issue with these altercit Briquettes because you can have a catch basin that might breed but it might have an outlet to a sump that has Gambusia, and there was a question of whether this could effect the fish, and there was kind of an ironic situation because we put the fish there in the first place. But the EEC has now agreed that even if a catch basin has an outlet to water with fish, it's still okay to put these briquettes in there which will be helpful to us. Not that there was ever any danger to fish, and this has been proven over and over again but it's a labeling issue, but it makes it easier for our staff out in the field to -- if they don't have to figure out whether a catch basin has some underground pipe going someplace they don't know about, if they can just treat it.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Those fish, do they survive through the winter?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

If the catch basin, if the sump is deep enough and it doesn't freeze to the bottom, they can survive through the winter. As a matter of fact, we have some sumps that have populations and what we do is we net the fish out from those areas and transport them around the County.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Great. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Just on that question, I just want to interrupt for one second, Dominick. In the plan it said -- you were referring to the Fresh

Water Minnows being stocked, but you allude to the fact that it's labor intensive. It almost appears that that might not be the choice that you would make because it's labor intensive, but it also appears that that might be the first choice, the thing to do.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

It's useful in certain situations. However, fish have non target impacts just like pesticides. And as a matter of fact, if you think about it, if you put fish that breed into an area and it turns out that they have an impact on non target organisms, you're basically stuck with them unless you want to poison them out, while at least if you put a pesticide in an area and it turns out to be a problem, the pesticide degrades and goes away. So fish can only be put in limited areas, areas where there aren't any native fish and where there aren't, in some cases, the amphibians can be impacted by the fish. So the fish are very good in certain situations, but they are certainly not a universal cure, it has to have water in it all the time and very often water bodies that have water in them all the time are not -- they have their own fish in them already. And again, there are some places where it's not appropriate for us to introduce these fish.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

I don't think that was what I was asking. In other words, in the plan you are saying that you use them but that it's a labor intensive difficulty to stock. So I am talking about the areas that you would think are good places to put them. Even though it's labor intensive, what I'm asking is that you would do that anyway then.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Oh yeah, we do that anyway. As a matter of fact, the laboratory program has taken the lead on keeping an eye on this because there are some controls and that's one of the things we get some summer hires, some student interns and that's a real good job for our summer kids to go out and stock fish, they're very enthusiastic about it and it's a good thing for them to do. And we do take requests from people if they have ornamental ponds or areas where they have -- they think they might have mosquito breeding, we'll send people out and stock them if necessary.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay, thanks. Legislator Crecca.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Yeah, actually some of the questions I had were asked by some of the other Legislators, but just to follow up on the sump because we've gotten contacted by at least two constituents recently who indicated they have small children and they have sumps right behind their backyard. And I guess I'm just not clear on the difference between, A, a catch basin and a sump; is there a difference?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

I'm sorry. A catch basin is the street drain.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Oh, okay.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

And then the sump is a recharge area. And a lot of people -- we're getting a lot of calls about sumps, people might not realize that certainly not all of them breed mosquitoes, as a matter of fact I'm sure it's a minority of them. But we are in the process, as we're getting calls in we're checking them out, in some cases we may work with the Highway Departments to get access to them.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

What type of treatment are you doing at the sumps, or let's say you identify that a sump is a problem -- we have one in particular, which I don't have the information exactly where it is, that at least the constituent is saying that every year there is a major mosquito problem from this sump which is literally on his backyard. I guess the question is what type of treatments do you use with those, or does it depend?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Yeah, it depends. If there's water in it all the time we'd put fish in it, if not we can put -- there are various larvacide formulations, bacterial products, Altosid Pellets and briquettes, we've got a couple of different choices now.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

When would that generally be done, in that May/June period or earlier?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, generally you want to wait until you actually find larvae before you start treating it for larvae. So we're really talking more about late April into May. You want to see -- for one thing, people may have mosquitoes and they may have a sump, but that doesn't necessarily mean the sump is causing the problem. So you would want to have -- in some ways you'd have to -- many situations you have to wait until the weather gets warm enough for the breeding to take place to really see if there are any larvae in there. But we are looking at sumps as people report them to us to see if they need work.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Just a couple of questions again on this. It sounds like our County has really taken an aggressive roll in this, not just now but in the past too, so I commend you on that. So my next questions are not meant to be critical but actually more of an inquiry nature.

I have been reading, and I passed around some articles too -- I mean, there's been a ton of articles obviously on this West Nile lately. And some of what I'm reading -- again, this is from the newspapers so it's subject -- it's questionable, let's put it that way; if there are any newspaper reporters here, I didn't really mean that.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

He takes it back.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

I guess my question is --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

The term of art is present company excluded.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

What I am reading from a lot of the newspapers is that the spraying that these mosquitoes may arrive in the Spring, okay, and there seems to be an indication, quote, from health officials according to the papers, that we could see them here earlier. And I was hearing earlier that the pellets, the briquettes, those type of treatments are going to take place in May and June. And I guess my question is, A, wouldn't it make more sense to start earlier -- and I'm not an expert, that's why I'm asking the question -- and B, do you need more staff quicker than what's already been budgeted and do you need more -- do you have the resources both money wise to give the pesticides that you need -- when I say pesticides, I'm talking about the pellets, the briquettes, not the spraying -- that you need to treat those areas?

In other words, I guess and I think this was raised as a concern by Legislator Fields earlier too, I mean, I almost feel like, seeing the newspaper articles, seeing that Queens had 2.65 of its population infected, that we should be like doing absolutely everything we can. And do you need more in order to do those preventive measures and will earlier make it better?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, not necessarily. I think that -- the newspaper articles, I think it's good to have an increase in awareness of mosquitoes, however I don't think that we should go too far in the other direction. We want people to do things like get rid of standing water in their yards, we don't want people to think that we've got to kill every last mosquito in the County in order to protect them. I am a bit concern that we're going to get a lot of demand for spraying which is really more than is necessary.

In many cases, these products don't really -- they do anything if there are no larvae present at the time, and the season starts slowly. If you look at viral activity, you look at mosquito-borne disease, it really doesn't get going until the mid to late summer. So we don't have to be out there immediately at every breeding site in order to reduce the populations. There are some spring time species that we'll see in the next few weeks to a month, but those were not the species that were around last year during the virus outbreak. We will be doing some early season treatments in late April. We will be gearing up and doing this in a controlled and organized manner, we don't need to hit the panic button and then just put materials everywhere.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Dominick, on what you just said you are seeing some spring mosquitoes that weren't around last year but the birds are that might be carrying the virus. So if those mosquitoes are infecting, or if those mosquitoes are biting the birds that have West Nile, don't they -- I mean, how does that process work?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, we see that kind of early spring process with eastern virus, but even then we don't start treatments for that until late April, early May in certain focus areas. It's still cool this time of the year and mosquito activity is very low, even though there are some spring time mosquitoes around. I was just at the American Mosquito Control Association meeting last week which is the national meeting, and one of the talks that was presented was on the ability of various mosquito species to transmit virus. And they said one of the interesting things was is that it is temperature dependent and even the difference between low 80's and in the 90's is somewhat market. So I think that we need to get things going with our overall mosquito prevention effort, our drainage effort, our early larviciding. I don't want anybody to think that next week the first time they see a mosquito that they are in a tremendous danger, and I think Dr. Bradley would concur with that.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Yeah, and I would like to just say a few things. In terms of West Nile, the main mosquito vector is Culex and that's a household mosquito. So the efforts that we want people to hear is that you can do something in your own backyard, in your community to decrease breeding; we can't go into people's backyard and dump that pail and put it in the basement. We have hired a Nurse Educator who is available to go out to different groups, to go to libraries, to go to communities, to go to schools to get that message out. So that's one thing. The other is I reiterate what Dominick said, just because you have a few mosquitoes here, the risk of transmission is very low. It's when the mosquito counts go up significantly that we're concerned in terms of the transmission of disease, and we're just not there now, that's why now we're doing the prevention. And normally if you look at Suffolk County's experience in the past, we've had transmission of virus or the existence of virus in mosquitoes only late in the season.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

I mean wouldn't you treat earlier to prevent that from happening?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

You do the prevention, the prevention.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

And that would come, you are still saying in May and June then.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Well, it starts --

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Well, he's been doing --

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

It's 12 months a year. The water management we can do is preventive work.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

He's been doing it for months.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Yeah, we do preventive work all year round.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

In other words, starting the pellets earlier --

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

That's not really going to do that much.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

-- or some of the treatments that you're talking about, the pesticide treatments. I guess pellets and granules are considered pesticides?

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Yes.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Starting those earlier is not necessarily going to make a better prevention, is that basically what you're saying?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

No, not necessarily. Especially the Culex mosquito that was probably the main vector in the city, that's one of our later season species. The water has to warm up before these things can really get going. Water temperatures are very cool this time of the year, so breeding, breeding activity is slow. The only thing that we might want to do, these 150 day briquettes we might want to get out a little earlier, but we're on the case with this already.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

And the only other thing which I asked before, do you have enough people --

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

That was my question.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

-- or will you have enough people and do you have enough money to do what you need to do to be prepared? In other words, what I don't -- I hope we don't hear -- and we can help you and that's one of the ways we can help you in that regard -- that come May or June the problem is worse than we thought, we need extra people and we have to go through the governmental process where, you know, we may not be able to act quickly enough. So I guess the question is do you have what you need?

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

We have enough --

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

We're talking about surveillance, too.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Well, we do the surveillance part and we went from one person to four people. And we've got the releases back, we got the list from Civil Service, we've canvassed the lists. These are Civil Service lists, it's different than the blue collar so we have to send letters out to each one of them, that has been done. That period will end I believe this week and then interviews will be selected and jobs will be offered, and we will have those people hopefully within a month.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

So they would be filled within a month.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

And you are saying that you will have enough people.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

One question that I have and then I think Legislator Foley has a question; were you finished?

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Yeah, I am actually.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay, thanks. Ditching; ditching is mentioned in the plan. I had thought that ditching was not allowed to be done anymore. I mean, that -- you know, we have spoken over the last couple of months that I am a big proponent of the Long island Initiative and Wetland Restoration. And yet it looks like ditching is still being done and I thought that that was not supposed to be done anymore. Can you just --

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, as far as that, water management work proceeds on two tracks. One is maintaining the existing system that's out there, because if these ditches are allowed to deteriorate, they can make the mosquito breeding problem worse; if you go to Fire Island you will see a good example of that where the ditches have been neglected for many years. Also, in some case these ditches and pipes allow the title flow to wetlands, so they're actually needed to maintain areas as natural areas. Meanwhile, what we're looking to do is to convert as many of these systems as we can to these new techniques as open marsh water management. But maintaining the ditches is something we can send our foremen out, they know what they're supposed to do with the ditches, they go ahead and do that. For these restoration projects, they require a certain amount of planning work to make sure you don't plug up the wrong ditch, for instance, you can actually make the problems worse.

So we're proceeding along both tracks and we will be phasing in open marsh water management wherever it's appropriate, and there might be places where it's not appropriate. And we also have ditches that go back into fresh water areas in some case, back into the woods along some of these wetlands. So open marsh water management is going to be important, but you can't apply it everywhere.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

But I think the -- and I can't find it right now, but there's a section that says something to the effect that you will be doing ditching, not maintenance of ditching; that's my question.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, maybe that should be clarified --

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

That's what I mean.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**



-- because we will be maintaining the existing ditch system while we're going to the -- we don't generally put new ditches into a marsh --

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

That's my question.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Yeah, we don't necessarily -- we are allowed under State Wetlands Laws to go out and maintain our existing ditch system actually without a permit.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Just clarify maintaining; what does maintaining mean?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Maintaining is if you have an old ditch that's silted up, you send a machine or people and they just clean it out, as opposed to putting in new ditches.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

But it doesn't widen it? It doesn't widen that ditch, it just cleans it out?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Basically it's to restore it to approximately its original dimensions. In some cases the piece of equipment might be a little different than the original one but it's a matter of inches, it's basically just to bring it back to what it was when it was originally dug.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

And then I guess my question is could you clarify, are you doing any new ditching; that's my question.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

No, only in the context of these water management restoration projects. For instance, in some cases we will plug up a ditch as fish habitat and we'll need to dig a shallow, what we call an excess ditch or a spur ditch into the mosquito breeding area so that the fish can get from the reservoir out to where the mosquitoes breed. So that's the kind of new ditching we do.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

And how wide are new ditches?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

The new ditches in that case would only be maybe a foot and a half to two feet wide. We're not in the business of constructing any major channels like that unless it was to bring that title flow to a marsh as part of a restoration effort.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay, thanks.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Thank you, Madam Chair. Dominick, I would like to get into the annual plan of work. You don't have each page numbered.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

It's on the top.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

It's on the top middle.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

On the top middle, okay. If you turn to page seven, the summary, it says, "To summarize, the highest priority of the division is disease prevention." I want you to comment on the following, "This will necessarily divert resources from other efforts."

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Where are you?

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Page seven.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

No, where on page seven?

**LEG. FOLEY:**

The third paragraph, "To summarize."

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Now, what resources are going to be diverted from where to do disease prevention?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, primarily we will have to concentrate our effort in the areas where we have the highest degree of disease control. Now, this might be an example of a --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

What do you mean by -- what resources are going to be diverted; from where to where? Because this gets to the issue of staffing, because when I see the words diverting resources, that gets back to the questions asked by other committee members of whether or not the staff that you have is adequate. We have been told by two departments that the staffing is adequate, but when I see the words diverting resources, that tells me that staffing is inadequate. So please explain the use of these words.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

To tell you the God's honest truth, what I think we're looking at here is a word processor error, because we -- I generate last year's -- each year's report from the last year, and to tell you the truth, I think we could probably delete that statement at this point.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

So in other words, there won't be a diversion of resources from other portions of your division to carry out the work plan.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Let me just clarify that, because Public Works has not yet responded to that question as to whether we have adequate resources.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

We have adequate resources to address what we expect to deal with this Summer, Spring and around the year.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

This is not to guarantee there won't be any mosquitoes in Suffolk County.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

We know that.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

It's not to guarantee there won't be any disease.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Right.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

But we have always had a very effective program, the most effective program in the region. And as was said earlier, the reason there were different responses was that the other municipalities were behind the curve.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Right.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

So the new resources that the Legislature and the Executive put in the budget last year are very important and we believe it will be adequate to address everything we expect.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay. And one of the reasons I ask these questions, Madam Chair, is if you go back to page five, for instance -- and again, this may be the language from earlier plans of years gone past, okay -- but you say, "Given the reality of budget constraints." So when I read these terms, these phrases, it tells me that there's an ongoing problem with staffing. But if you are saying to me that some of this verbiage is from prior years, that it doesn't apply anymore or it applies less now than it did in the past?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Well, let's just make it clear that we'll never be able to address all mosquito problems everywhere in the County at once.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

We know that, we know that.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

And I think everybody, you should understand that, it's probably not even a desirable thing to do. If we have --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Right. The birds have to eat too.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

For instance, if we have a significant outbreak, even with the resources that we have here, it's possible that we will have a significant outbreak that will have to, you know, let some other problems slide.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay. But as a person -- and this is to the Commissioners. As a committee that oversees the budget and puts monies into

the budget for your departments, as one committee member, when I read this kind of language about budget constraints, about diverting resources, I need some clarification on that to see whether or not where we're going, we're in the right direction or not.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

I understand. As a matter of fact, we'll review this and make any appropriate corrections --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

-- before the plan of work gets adopted.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Thank you.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

But one of the things in that plan, we always --

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Can I just interrupt for a second? It's my understanding that a CN is going to be put in on Tuesday for the whole Legislature to approve this document or this plan. Will that change so that the Legislature will have an opportunity to review it before Tuesday? In other words, how can they approve it if it's not --

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Well, I would assume that we could by tomorrow distribute this work plan, revised work plan to address the particular concerns that have been brought up at this meeting.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

And just to bring the point, that given the reality of budget constraints --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Yes.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

-- I think that everybody in County government, you're not much of a manager if you couldn't do a better job if you had more resources.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Correct.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

We're never going to have our full wish list.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

I would like to just make one comment.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Yes.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Here's a list of viruses that we've detected over the last ten years.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Right.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Last year we saw some viruses, we saw Malaria, we hadn't seen that in decades, and we saw West Nile which was brand new. So I think we think we're prepared based on what we had last year --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

-- and anticipating what we might have. We could have a brand new virus that comes to Suffolk County and we're not going to be prepared for everything. You know, we have surveillance so we'll be able to bring what we need to, but we may need to do something quickly at the last minute.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Well, that's why every -- and through the Chair, this is why every year, particularly last year through the budget process, we had asked the administrative branch what would be needed to attack this problem. So that wish list was what was supposed to have been to use the word transmitted to us in order to have you fully armed for the season.

Let me just go on to another page, and I'll just take a couple of more minutes because I know some folks want to get to another County destination after the committee meeting. If you turn to page nine, "4), Water Management and Source Reductions: The Division of Vector control is in the process of hiring 17 additional staff that will expand its ongoing program of water management", And then if we go to the description of water management, that's only part of what you do. So my question is those 17 additional staff that will be used for the Water Management Program, can that staff also be used for control of mosquito larvae which --

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Absolutely. The water management work is conducted in the winter and then these same staff --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay. So they will be able to flow from one --

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

Yes.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay, very good. And finally, part of the plan, I didn't see it here when I reviewed it earlier. In light of the fact that you brought us some happy news about the Altosid pellets and that you have the approval for those, I think part of the plan will have to also be, if you will, an another page or two on how the department intends to work with the different townships in identification of the different catch basins and the like in order to move ahead with the program, to have that kind of intergovernmental relationship or cooperation with the towns. Phone calling is fine but, you know, we really need to get into the dirt of this which is to get copies of all their streets, get copies of all their schematics on whether -- hopefully they have them, of all their catch basins so you have that kind of, you know, detailed, active cooperation with the townships on this.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

With some of the towns, that's already been

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Do you have that --

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

And Dr. Bradley, I know you worked with the towns.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

I sent a letter to all Supervisors about getting prepared and getting the word out about Culex in terms of what people can do in their backyards. We have prepared a fax sheet which I'm about --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

I don't mean Culex, I'm talking about on the town roads.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Right, that was one part of the letter. The other part was that Dominick, Public Works will be contacting each Supervisor about catch basins and other areas besides in individuals backyards.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

So I started that process and then handed it off to Dominick.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Well, just to give you basic primer in local government, some townships you go through your supervise because they don't have an elected town highway person. Others, such as in our town, the Town of Brookhaven, there's an elected official for town highway, so you don't have to go through the supervisor, you go to the highway person.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Oh no, we've been contacting the Highway Departments already. We usually have an ongoing, working relationship with the highway departments anyway because we have pipes that go under their roads.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Let me ask a more parochial question, and I'll end with this, in my own Legislative District. Have you spoken to the Town Highway Department about catch basins within the 7th Legislative District and how you intend to use this product?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

I haven't personally spoken to the, I'd have to --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Has your staff spoken to them?

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

My biologist is working on that, he's unfortunately on vacation this week.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

That's okay. But if we can have an update for our next meeting on how that's going. I know we're throwing a lot at you, but this is what we need to do in order to move the program ahead.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Have you had an opportunity --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Thank you. Have you had an opportunity to look at the bill that's pending to use spraying as a last resort?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Me, yes. And from the Health Department's perspective, we only order spraying in a last resort, when there's virus in the community and we need to decrease transmission. Dominick is the one that does the preventive side of it, and we do work together on that, so I would like to hear his comments.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

We have some reservations about that. Certainly the concept of last resort we agree and I think, as you see, we've outlined -- that's basically our program. Some of the language relates to explicit approval before any funds are expended for pesticide application, it implies -- I think it could be interpreted that we would have to come back to the Legislature for any particular spraying. The sentence I have a problem with says, "The County shall not expend funds for such spraying or pesticide application unless such expenditures have explicitly been approved for such specific purpose of spraying or pesticide application." You know, if that means -- I will tell you what -- you know, it's fine with me. If that means that once you approve the budget and approve the Vector Control Work Plan that we don't have to come back to you anymore, that's fine. But if that means that a problem has developed or we think a problem is developing and we have to come back to the Legislature for authorization to spend those monies in a particular area, a specific purpose, I see that as a problem in our effectiveness.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

That would be a significant problem from our side because the Legislature meets every couple of weeks and if we have Malaria in a particular area, if we have Eastern Equine, we can't wait two weeks to be able to go in and do something.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Let me just tell you on my side what's happened and why this has become the number one discussion every month that we have a meeting. I have a packet of it must be this thick of letters that have been faxed, e-mailed, mailed and then phone calls of people who are anti-spraying, and they're asking me to speak for them and question and be accountable. We heard from some of those people last time that -- and I think we all agree, does anyone want to have that kind of a disease where there might be a death? Absolutely not. Does anyone want to be sprayed where they may have that kind of a death long-term? You know, no. So we have a really controversial issue here. We have -- we have to be accountable, all of us, the County, the Health Department, the Legislators. So it's a problem, you know.

I think Dominick, in his early remarks, said that he has a certain amount or you have a certain amount of phone calls each year for nuisance spraying.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Thousands of them, yes.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

And years ago, probably 500 of them were made by me because I live in an area where I jokingly but I'm very serious, if I could get a penny for every mosquito that's on my property I'd be a billionaire, I think. And they are nuisance mosquitoes. My husband and I bought a boat just to escape our yard because it's totally unlivable. But, you know -- and I don't spray, but those are personal issues. And I understand the issues that people come to, the lady who talked about the organic farm and destroying her living, there are probably many of those, although I don't think we know how many.

And so I think the question really comes down to what is going to happen? Let's say the disease, you know -- I mean, we're reading it -- is noted, what is going to be the criteria for actual spraying?

And I guess we all just have to deal with how that's going to result. You know, what will make -- you have the final say?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Uh-huh.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

What will make you --

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

In terms of the part where I get involved.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Right.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Now Dominick, as he said, has other times when he does adulticide.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

And we also should just keep in mind that this just says pesticides; BTI, the bacterial product is a pesticide. Most of us would agree that you are using those sorts of materials to prevent the need for spraying in residential areas is something that's very appropriate.

When I read this, my first take on this was that, gee, we're already doing everything that's in there. I mean, we already spend most of our effort in water management, in all the things that prevent us from getting to the point of running the fog truck or the helicopter in residential areas. So in a lot of ways I felt like, well, this is nice but it doesn't change anything, it wouldn't change the operation because that's already the way we have been doing that and we've been doing it that way for many years. As a matter of fact, we've made great progress in reducing the use of pesticides, particularly in the residential type applications.

So we appreciate the concerns but I'm hoping that now that you've seen the plan of work, you know, that you can see that this is the way the program is already structured. We don't just use pesticides as a first resort.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

I'm sorry.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Go ahead.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

I just want to say that I think everybody is agreeing that we don't want to spray unless we have to spray, and I think that is the policy that's laid out in the plan. The problem I have with the legislation is I agree with the idea behind it, but I think that we don't want to limit ourselves or limit our experts, in this case the Health Department through its vector control, the Department of Public Works, in what it can do and how it can -- or even it have question in an emergency type situation where they need to act quickly. I think by the Legislature approving the plan, overall plan on a yearly basis, I think that does give us oversight, that does allow us to indicate that we would like to see this done as a last resort. But again, I have the same concerns that were raised by Commissioner Bartha in this in that we don't want to make it that they have to come back to the Legislature or we don't want to have a situation where there is some question and they can't act in the public's best interest from a health perspective in a last minute type situation.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Dr. Bradley, last year when we sprayed for West Nile, how often and how many places did we spray?

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

We sprayed mainly in the Town of Huntington, small into Smithtown and small into Babylon. But Dominick is the actual sprayer, he could probably give you the actual dimensions or I could come back with a map.



**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

Actually, we did a single aerial application in Huntington and we had about 15 truck nights, that is one truck per night, going out and spraying by the ground application. So basically, any area that we treated in terms of West Nile we treated just the one time. And if you look at regional standards, I had to -- I gave a talk last week at the AMCA meeting and I described the New York State response, and it turns out that in the State of New York approximately 900,000 acres were treated by air for adult mosquitoes; of those 900,000 acres, Suffolk did about 8,400. So we were very targeted. And New York City, for instance, had to be treated twice by air, we only treated once in any area we did treat. So we keep these low level.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

I just want to point out also that there's an Integrated Pest Management Law also and we're greatly affected by both of them, both in the buildings, grounds as well as mosquito control. And there is a provision in there that the Commissioner of Health has to agree that particular -- whatever pesticides we're using are low toxicity, I believe is the term of art, and that's -- you know, so we do that. There's a very close coordination of this program with the health aspects and the operational aspects.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

And when we make the decision, there are pros and cons on both sides. I don't wake up and say, "Oh boy, I get to spray pesticides today"; it's not a decision that I get to easily. Not to make you laugh, but it's very difficult to get to that decision. I don't use pesticides in my home because for weed control, the pros and cons I don't agree. I'm trying to control a communicable disease that has killed people, and the pros and cons are very different in that decision making process. We identify groundwater contamination with pesticides; I well know the adverse effects of pesticides. So as Charlie and Dominick have said, we work together, and when I get involved it's because I'm concerned about communicable disease.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

So then I don't know if we've answered the question then.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

I can't answer the question what's going to make me.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Because there are so many factors. The mosquito counts; are the counts going up, are the counts going down? Is it cold outside? Is it windy outside? What virus are we talking about, is it Eastern Equine, is it West Nile, is it Malaria, is it some other new virus that's come into the community? Is it in one small location or hundreds of birds and thousands of birds. Is there a competent vector or are there mosquitoes that aren't a competent vector? It's so difficult to make that decision. I cannot just come and say, "Okay, that's going to be it." I wish it was that easy.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

My life would be much easier if it was that easy and I could say, "Oh, that's what we're going to do, that's what that little book says."

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay, thanks. Does anybody have any questions?

**MR. SABATINO:**

What I could do is I might be able to shed some light, though, on the provision that the Commissioner spoke about before.

The genesis of it was, as I recall, Legislator Bishop wanted this provision because last year when additional money was being added to the budget, there was a discussion about X amount of dollars being added and then there was a breakout between pesticides and equipment and personnel and whatever. And the money was allocated primarily, as I recall, for personnel and equipment, not for the pesticide application. So the theory was that if you believe you need more money, if those estimates were accurate, that money wasn't provided in the line item. The idea was not to have a vote, you know, in the middle of the emergency or the crisis, but sometime during the course of the year there should be a sufficient amount of money in a line for pesticide application that would be adequate to deal with the issue but it would be the reflection of a vote to provide that funding, not that monies were transferred from someplace else within the budget internally or administratively.

So the genesis of the clause was really the budget process from last year where more money was requested than was actually provided for and there was a desire on his part just to make sure that sometime prior to the need for it, the money would be budgeted.

**COMMISSIONER BARTHA:**

If that was clarified we could live with that, I think.

**MR. NINNIVAGGI:**

And I think you also have to understand that, for instance, last year we didn't know we had a problem in Suffolk County until late September and in that -- at that time, I had pretty much expended our pesticide budget and we ended up, I think we needed to have a small infusion into our budget. I think that I would be concerned if we were in a situation like this and the problem was much worse than anybody could have anticipated and there was much of a delay in getting the additional funding transferred say if it's not available in my budget. We've been actually pretty good at staying within or below our pesticide budget over the years, even in the cases when we have had virus. But things can happen, as this shows, that nobody could ever anticipate.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay, thank you. We didn't hear from you, Scott, hello.

**DR. CAMPBELL:**

Nothing to say, I guess.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay. I appreciate all of your input. And again, we need to ask these questions because we are accountable --

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

We understand.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

And I hope you understand our side of it. And we really appreciate everything that you've done. Thanks for coming back each time. We're going to get on with the resolutions, okay.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Do you want me to do tobacco or do you want me to wait till another meeting?

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

I think that the Legislators have to be somewhere else in 15 minutes, so we're going to try to whiz through this.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Okay.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Maybe you and I could have some type of a private meeting next week and then maybe I'll share that with the rest of them and then have next time it would be kind of a simplistic task. Thanks.

**COMMISSIONER BRADLEY:**

Sure.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Thank you.

### **Tabled Resolutions**

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay, Tabled Resolutions. **IR 1146-00 (P) - Adopting Local Law No. 2000, a Local Law to require well-water testing prior to acquisition of residential homes (Caracappa).**

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Motion.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Second the motion.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Motion to approve.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? **Approved (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

**1148-00 (P) - Initiating Affordable Health Insurance Program for Long Island Small Businesses (Levy).**

**LEG. CARACCIOLO:**

Motion to table.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

All in favor? Opposed? **Tabled (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

### **Introductory Resolutions**

**1263-00 - Adopting Local Law No. 2000, a Charter Law to establish "Last Resort" Vector Control Spraying Policy for Suffolk County (Fields).**

**LEG. CARACCIOLO:**

Motion to table.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

All in favor? Opposed? **Tabled (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

**1280-00 (P) - Adopting Local Law No. 2000, a Local Law to drive repeat violators of ban on sale of tobacco products to minors out of Suffolk County (Fields).** I am going to table this --

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Public hearing?

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

No, I'm going to table it until the next meeting, actually, because Dr. Bradley had some points to talk about regarding enforcement.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Second the motion to table.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? **Tabled (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

**1295-00 (P) - Accepting and appropriating additional 100% Federal Grant Funds from the New York State Department of Health to the Department of Health Services for the Early Intervention Administration Program (County Executive).**

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Motion.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

All in favor? Opposed? Tabled, **approved (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

**1296-00 (P) - Accepting and appropriating additional 100% State Grant Funds from the New York State Office of Mental Health to the Department of Health Services, Division of Community Mental Hygiene Services, to enable the enhancement of intensive case management services necessary to implement provision of Kendra's Law (County Executive).**

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Motion.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

All in favor? Opposed? **Approved (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

**1297-00 (P) - Accepting and appropriating additional 100% Federal Grant Funds from the New York State Office of Mental Health to the Department of Health Services, Division of Mental Hygiene Services, for the Children's Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team and creating positions for the program (County Executive).**

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Motion.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

All in favor? Opposed? **Approved (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

**1300-00 (P) - Authorizing the Department of Health Services to transfer the title of the Laerdal Defibrillators issued to ambulance and first responder companies (County Executive).**

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

On the motion.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Yes, I think we all had a question about that one. Go ahead.

**LEG. CARACCILO:**

Just an explanation.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Okay. Paul?

**MR. SABATINO:**

Well, this is a -- this goes back to 1989. The department of health originally purchased these defibrillators at a certain price that were going to be used with the various ambulance companies, the County retained title. There's an opportunity now to purchase new ones by trading in the old ones and getting a better price, but the key to this is that the County has to transfer title to those defibrillators to the fire and ambulance companies in order to make the purchase. So it's really just a technical way to update the equipment and get the benefit of getting the trade-in value credited.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

So it's a question of trade-in value and not that they could have been sold?

**MR. SABATINO:**

No.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Is that even an option?

**MR. SABATINO:**

The real advantage is that you can get the trade-in value by purchasing them with the ambulance companies, but the key is -- because with the way the deal was originally structured, the County held title even though they are being used by other parties.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Anybody have any more questions on that?

**LEG. CRECCA:**

No, motion to approve.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Second.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Second. All in favor? Opposed? **Passed (Vote: 5-0-0-0).**

Motion to adjourn.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

If I could just say on the record, Madam Chair. Just since the beginning of the year you have done a great job with the West Nile Virus in regards to, you know, this committee and what we have to do in regards to getting information disseminated for our constituents. And I think this is going to be a problem that we're going to have to deal with for sometime. And I appreciate your willingness to have everybody here and get all the information sorted out so that we better understand it as Legislators for our constituents, and I appreciate that.

**LEG. CRECCA:**

Ditto.

**CHAIRPERSON FIELDS:**

Thank you very much.

(\*The meeting was adjourned at 11:17 A.M.\*)

**Legislator Ginny Fields**

**Chairperson, Health Committee**

**- Denotes Spelled Phonetically**